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never had before, need not be dwelt on, since all of us realize this. The A. L. A. has put its hand to the plow and cannot look back. Neither need we dilate on the achievement of the service in placing libraries on the map to a large part of our male population by teaching thousands of our men, unacquainted with libraries before the war, to use them. And in passing, may we express our full sense of the fine coöperation given us in this accomplishment by the book publishers of this country. Neither can we do more at this time than mention the stimulus given by the war service to the professional consciousness of library people all over this country. But in closing, we must speak of one great satisfaction the library war service has given this Association, and that is the knowledge that through it the A. L. A. has found itself. Do you remember Kipling's story, "The ship that found herself?" The day had come for the vessel's first overseas voyage, "and though she was but a steamer of 2,500 tons, she was the very best of her kind, the outcome of forty years of experiments and improvements in framework and machinery."

"And now," said the owner's daughter delightedly to the captain, "she's a real ship, isn't she?"

"Oh, she's not so bad," the skipper replied, "but I'm sayin' it takes more than

christenin' to make a ship. She has to find herself yet. She's all here, but the parts of her have not learned to work together yet. They've had no chance. Every inch of her, ye'll understand, has to be livened up and made to work with its neighbor—sweetenin' her, we call it, technically."

And the ship departed on her first overseas voyage, and in the midst of it she encountered a storm which tossed her up and plunged her down and battered her superstructure and flooded her decks until she thought herself lost. And all through the stress of storm, the ship's many parts called to each other. There was friction between the plates and the rivets as the plates cried aloud at the strain, and the engines called on the steam for more power, and all called on the rudder for a straighter course, but suddenly among the complaining parts "there was a long silence that reached without a break, from the cutwater to the propeller blades of the ship, and the steam knew what had happened at once, for when a ship finds herself, all the talking of the separate pieces ceases and melts into one voice, which is the soul of the ship."

"Well, I'm glad you've found yourself," said the steam, "and now we'll go to our wharf and clean up a little and next month we'll do it all over again"—if we have to.

REACHING ALL CLASSES OF THE COMMUNITY

By JOHN H. LEETE, *Director, Carnegie Library, Pittsburgh, Pa.*

Judging by the library records of the fifteen largest cities of the United States, we have made some progress toward reaching all classes of the community. Our books, at least, are leading a useful life. The circulation figures of these cities show what would be an average demand of five times a year for every book in their collections. These same figures would seem to show that every resident, including

babies in arms, reads one book every four months. The registration records show that one person in every seven of the total population is nominally, at least, a patron of the library. This means that even more than one family in every seven must come within the sphere of the library's influence.

Now if these were facts and not mere misleading statistics and still more de-

ceptive averages the situation would be somewhat satisfactory and extremely encouraging. If every resident took even such a moderate dose of library salvation as one book in four months we would possibly be justified in adopting a policy of watchful waiting. But unfortunately for our peace of mind we know that the figures quoted are only statistics and averages and not solid facts. We know that our *books* can do more *work*—we may question whether the librarian can do more work—but we will not question the fact that there is more work that ought to be done. We know that many intelligent people of the community, many of our personal friends, make no use of the library and that few, very few, have the library habit. We know, in short, that we are very far from reaching all classes of the community. We know that we are even far from making a sale to many who must be regarded as hopeful prospects for library service. If we look facts in the face we must recognize that the library is not holding the place in the community that it ought to hold—and unless we are over-optimistic we will not count upon riding into that place on the wave of war activities.

In one particular, at least, the library is not to blame for this situation. Whatever the shortcomings of library work of yesterday, no one can doubt the willingness, the intense desire of the public library of today to be of service to the community. We have left far behind the time when the library was simply a mausoleum for the safe-keeping of books—the time when the book was chained tight to the desk, and the chain was made short to prevent the book being polluted by too great a circle of readers. We have gone beyond the stage in which mechanical technique necessarily consumed the most of the time of the librarian. Today we are unanimous in making not mere possession, but use, the test of library efficiency.

We have made another step toward universal library service by adopting more

businesslike methods. Few of us would now feature fur coats in midsummer or attempt to turn the ten-year-old boy from his coveted jew's harp to a grand piano. We may wisely go farther in the adaptation of our stock to our patrons, not at the sacrifice of our ideals, but as a means of reaching them. We may certainly do more to anticipate the needs of the community we serve. The library is still too often the place for post-mortems. However, while there are still many business principles and practices which remain to be generally adopted by the library, no argument is now necessary to prove that library work is a practical business as well as a theoretical profession.

In order to limit the discussion of this question to the three points I have in mind we shall make two additional assumptions. We shall assume for one thing that the library has ample funds to carry its ideals into fulfillment. Unfortunately this is not always true, but I know of no surer way to make it come true than by reaching more of the community more effectively. It is true that more funds are necessary to do a bigger job, but it is equally true that it is necessary to do a bigger job in order to secure more funds. We shall also assume that the public is ready for more extensive library service. This I believe to be unquestionably true. The public is more appreciative of past services, more ready to ask for new services, more receptive of the advances of the library than ever before.

If then we are eager to serve—if we have the staff and the resources that are needed for service—if the public wishes to be served—why is the library not reaching all classes of the community? I would not presume to answer this question definitely or professionally. However, my viewpoint has until recently been that of the outside public, and from that viewpoint certain general principles seem to have a direct bearing upon this question. It is these general principles which I wish to bring to your consideration.

The first condition I believe to be abso-

lutely essential to reaching all classes of the community is a more sympathetic, genuine and active participation by the library in all the interests and activities of the community. I mean by this not only participation as a professional librarian in activities bearing directly or closely on library work. I mean also participation in non-library activities, both as individuals and as an organization. I mean not only participation in book campaigns but in bond campaigns. I mean in short that the library and the librarian must be part of the community.

We have held closely to our professional groove. As a result, our work, which touches so many interests of active life—which finds indeed its chief justification in its service of those interests—has come to be regarded by many people as a calling for the recluse and the hermit. The “niceness” and “retiredness” of our work is even regarded as sufficient reason for placing our salaries also at the vanishing point. We are apparently expected to soften the pangs of hunger by devouring exclusively the product of the pen—not of the pen that makes Chicago famous. We are the objects of some curious misunderstandings. Even in the throes of the most human as well as the most divine passion we are represented as running true to type. The profession is not often honored by the attention of the artist, but recently a librarian was depicted in what might be designated as a library balcony scene. The lover, an anæmic, emaciated, bloodless individual is pictured bearing an enormous armful of bulky volumes to his lady-love. I have chanced also upon several word pictures recently and they all tell the same story. It is not a true story, of course (I trust we have some sense of humor), but it does give a caricature of the popular conception of the librarian. What is the basis of this reputation unless it be the impression we have given that we are interested only in books and books alone!

During the war the religious organizations went outside the spiritual field to

provide bodily comfort and cheer for the soldier. Chocolate and doughnuts, and even cigarettes, for the first time became parts of our religious creeds. I wonder what we would have thought if our War Service Committee had proposed that we undertake such a service. We would have thought that they were candidates for even greater seclusion than a librarian's sanctum. And still worse, I am afraid that the public would have agreed with us. Whether or not chocolate and cigarettes and doughnuts go as well with a good book as they do with indifferent salvation, is beside the question. The point I am trying to make is not that we should have mixed doughnuts and books, but that we think of ourselves and the public thinks of us as interested exclusively and eternally in books and immune from all other sympathies and activities. In other words that we are in a backwater of books, and not out in the full sweep of the current of active life in the community.

Let me mention just one additional instance in support of the statement that we librarians confine our interests largely to the book side of our work. Recently I attended a conference of social work—it was more than that—it was the National Conference of Social Work. It represented the ideals and the activities of social work of to-day in the United States. It included practically every organization interested in community welfare work, giving the term welfare its most liberal interpretation. Its program discussed topics bearing closely and sometimes directly upon our own field of work. The purpose, the personnel, the program of the conference were all kin to us. Yet the library and library work were not mentioned and the librarian was noticeably absent.

Now, of course, we must know books—that is our business or at least is a part of our business—but books and bookish things should not be the *exclusive interest* of the librarian. There is a human side of our work—and if we are to reach all classes of the community, that human side must be emphasized. We must know what

our people are interested in, what they are thinking about, what they are doing, in order to make the library of real service to them; and we cannot know what they are thinking and doing without being active in the general community life. We cannot trust long range observations from a library pinnacle for our working knowledge of the community and the definite service needed. Nor can we interpret the thought of the community at large by observations made upon a narrow circle of bookish people. You recall the incident of the Scandinavian woman who spent her six months in this country visiting various Scandinavian communities. She returned to her native land convinced that the United States was virtually a Scandinavian colony. Public institutions need intimate contact with the whole community if they are to serve the whole community. The government that loses close contact with its people soon ceases to serve them. The church has learned the necessity of abandoning the seclusion of the study and is bending every energy to come close to the everyday life of the people. Education became a factor of wide power only when it popularized its exclusive academic theories. So it seems to me that the effectiveness of the service of the public library depends upon its establishing close relations with the public. These relations must come from an identity of interests and sympathies. This identity of interests and sympathies must be expressed by active participation in the affairs of the community.

We need the backing of the community if we are to reach all classes of the community, and we can only secure that backing by doing our share of the general community work. The library must support the community if the community is to support the library. Do you recall the feeling of dismay that came over you when you were asked to undertake the first modest money campaign for books for soldiers? Do you recall also the feeling of relief that you experienced when our organization was classed in the last cam-

paign with the other welfare organizations? What was the cause of that dismay? What was the basis for that relief? Were we not dismayed because we feared that we had not formed that personal contact with the community as a whole which would enable us to make a strong appeal to the public and to form an organization of active workers which would be effective in presenting that appeal? Were we not relieved in the last campaign because we felt that these other organizations had formed this contact and could make this appeal? I know that we argued with ourselves that the other organizations from their very nature took hold of the imagination and hearts of the people—but are there not similar opportunities open to the library? We had allowed ourselves to be regarded as an institution shut in by the two covers of a book. We had neglected to emphasize the human side of our work, and it is from that side of our work that our appeal must be made to a large part of the community. We must serve as privates in the ranks of other activities if we hope to muster followers in the library's cause. The appeal of the community must reach the library, if the appeal of the library is to sound not faintly in the ear of the community.

I hope no one will misunderstand me. I am not arguing that we should lower our standards. I am not arguing that we should turn our backs upon the books. I am not even arguing for the adoption of side show methods in library work. I believe that in books and related literary material we have our natural approach to the community and that through them we may most effectively serve them. I am arguing, however, for the broadening of our interests to include the other interests of the community. I am arguing that the library as an institution and the members of the staff as individuals should become active participants in the general affairs of the community. I do believe that the library should become a true community center. The library is primarily a localized institution and if it is to be

alive and growing it must sink its roots deep in the community.

As a second essential for reaching all classes of the community we must have something to give that is of value to all classes of the community. There can of course be no question of the intrinsic value of what we have to offer. The records of the experiences, the beliefs, the accumulated wisdom, the hopes and fancies, the achievements of mankind of yesterday and of today surely have something of worth in themselves. But even articles of great intrinsic value are not always valuable to every individual under every condition; under certain conditions they may be negatively worthless or even positively injurious. The question therefore is not the intrinsic value of our material but its value to the man whom we are trying to reach.

This means that we must take the broadest possible view of our work. We cannot satisfy the varied interests of a community by offering a standard quantity of standard material of standard quality. We must "make the punishment fit the crime." The public has come to have a nice discrimination even in breakfast foods. Nor can we always serve articles in their original packages. We must be ready with our teaspoonful of broth as well as our pound of beef. Sometimes our prescriptions must even be of the predigested variety. Are we always ready to do this—or if we are ready to respond to an insistent demand for this simple service do we cultivate this humble field as diligently as the more attractive professional fields? Do we recognize that the teaspoonful of gruel may be more necessary than the pound of steak? Are we really anxious to make the library popular?

Certainly our conception of our work must be broad enough to enable the library to fill its proper place in democracy. That is not only advisable as a means of reaching all classes of the community—it is also a plain duty. We are at the beginning of a new order of things. The people are in the saddle and they are leaving

the beaten trails. New relations must be established between capital and labor, between employer and employed, between government and the governed. Conflicting opinions and clashing interests must be reconciled if order is to come from the present unrest. Many students of government believe that a clearing house of ideas and opinions must be established if orderly democracy is to survive. In this great work of informing and educating the community, in this readjustment of old ideas to meet new conditions, in helping the individual to find his place in the new order, the library should play some part. Granted that this seems an ambitious program to undertake under present conditions, it still remains true that the library has many qualifications for the rôle. It is a public institution free from religious prejudices and class interests. It has the material resources and the trained workers. It is a welfare organization that belongs to the whole community. I am absolutely convinced that in this service we have a great opportunity—an opportunity to make the library a truly vital force in the community, to make it in fact the people's university. Have we the vision and the courage and the initiative to take advantage of this opportunity?

A few weeks ago without warning I asked fifteen of my staff holding executive positions, most of whom had long experience, to state in not more than twenty-five words their conception of the function of the public library. They were allowed less than five minutes for what they laughingly called "the examination." These definitions all breathed the spirit of service, but in breadth and in depth they varied greatly. One of them so aptly expresses the point I am trying to make that I shall quote it. It read, "The function of the public library is to supplement every interest of the community with literary materials and related literary materials and to provide means and methods of contact." That is the broad conception we must take of our work if we are to reach all classes

of the community. That conception makes library work a real job.

There is a third essential for reaching all classes of the community. We must not only know and be a part of all the interests of the community, we must not only have something to give of value to all classes of the community, we must also let all classes of the community *know* that we have something to give them. We all recognize the importance of this principle in the abstract but, speaking for one library at least, we do not carry it into very effective execution. If you have any doubts as to the ignorance of the public upon the service offered by the library, ask the man in the street what he thinks is the function of the public library. You will find a tremendous gap between your conception as a librarian and his conception as one of your prospects. And that is one of the chief reasons why the library is not giving its full service to the community. We sit in our strongholds behind a barricade of books, waiting patiently—too patiently—for a call upon our services, when I venture to say not fifty per cent of our people know that we have anything to offer them beyond the loan of a book they do not particularly crave.

Is our duty done when we meet the demand that is thrust upon us? Are we to sit with folded hands and wait for more demands? That is not the American way. The American doughboy did not sit in his trench and wait for the attack, reasonably safe but perfectly harmless. He *sought* the Hun. He went over the top and left the safety of his trenches behind him. Isn't it time for the American public library to go over the top of the books and put the no-library land of today behind the trenches of tomorrow? Let us make some new library territory. Let us let the public see at short range what we have for them.

We need aggressiveness. We need no longer tell the man in the street there *is* a public library but we do need to tell him just what that public library can *do* for

him. And that message should not be held till he calls for it at the library. It should go to him at his home, at his club, at his place of business. It should be a personal message brought in person whenever possible; it should be a definite message of help, not a general exhortation to use the public library; it should be put in plain English, not couched in library jargon. Still more important, the message should come not from the director or heads of departments alone, but from every member of the staff. And our staffs must be organized as carefully to accomplish results in this direction as in other departments of library work. We must make it our business.

Greater activity by the library in the community and community affairs, something to give of value to all classes of the community, aggressiveness in getting to the community a definite message of specific service—these seem to me three essential conditions for reaching all classes of the community. They are general principles, of course, and not a specific formula. You have heard of them all many times before, but that does not detract from their importance. At any rate they are three prominent articles in my creed as a pseudo-librarian. How shall they be accomplished? I am sure of two facts. They cannot be accomplished by one grand push or the sounding of a trumpet. We may walk round about the walls of Jericho seven times—indeed in some cases we probably have already done so—and it won't do any harm to blow the trumpet; but I'm afraid the walls will still have to be scaled. I am equally convinced, however, that there is not one person present who does not know of promising points of attack on the Jericho that stands in the way of his library. On the contrary the very multitude of opportunities is itself confusing. We hardly know where to strike first. Then too we have friends within the walls.

If you ask me what we have done in Pittsburgh, I shall have to answer, practi-

cally nothing—we have but scratched the surface, but we have made a beginning; and while it is still only the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen, I have such a firm belief in the

future of library work, I have such confidence in the ability of the workers, that I know in time the things hoped for will be accomplished and the things not seen will be tangible realities.

THE LIBRARY'S TASK IN RECONSTRUCTION

By PAUL M. PAINE, *Librarian, Public Library, Syracuse, N. Y.*

What is meant by the subject of this morning's meeting is, I take it, that we who are here feel a new call to service. That word is our creed. Service is the whole duty of all of us heralds and bill-posters of literature.

For us, as for others, many things have changed. But the ideal of service has not changed. The material with which we work has not changed; nor has the need of our work diminished. What our whole duty was before the war is our whole duty now. Has the glow of the great conflagration of the past four years thrown a new light upon it? Has it kindled anew the inspiration to service? Has the war brought any fresh conception of how our service to mankind may be bettered and built up? These are the questions I shall try to answer. My twenty minutes deals with the worker and his field, not with his tools.

I answer these questions in two statements. The first is that as agents of free reading we need to go back to rock bottom, and consider anew some old ideas about what books can do. The second is that we need to broaden the field, recruit a new army of readers, engage in a big plan of home mission work on behalf of books.

Nine years ago the Amherst class of 1885 met for its twenty-fifth reunion. It did not confine itself to the usual activities of quarter century reunions—congratulating those who have succeeded; toasts to the memory of those who have died; speculating idly on the fate of those who have failed; passing the hat, perhaps, for some new memorial of the class; en-

gaging as youthfully as possible in the bewildering new college yells and the alumni parade. The class of '85 asked itself what Amherst had become, what future it had, a small college among so many great and booming universities, what its loyal and intelligent alumni ought to do about it.

What the address of the class of '85 to the trustees of Amherst college was, and the effect it had upon the fortunes of Amherst, are matters of history. I am not concerned with that, but I am concerned with certain passages in the address, for example:

"Amherst has never taught that every man stands for himself alone, nor that the value of education is in its purchasable gratifications.

"Technical education, which, so far as government is concerned, for the most part teaches devices but not principles, proceeds upon the assumption that it is not wise to look back, and that in any difficulty we should consider, not how we got there, but how we can get out. 'As if,' said Edmund Burke, 'we should consult our invention and reject our experience.' Invention is the parent of Utopias, radicalism of all kinds. Experience is the parent of improvement, progress, conservatism."

And quoting Dr. Woodrow Wilson, as he was then called:

"Liberal training was meant to prepare them for the whole of life rather than some particular part of it."

These words represent one side of a great educational dispute, the dispute between vocations and humanities. We librarians have no part in that quarrel. We are not trying to exclude any class of readers, nor to deny to anybody any kind of useful reading. Our courses are all